half of the back are much conspicuous and broader than that of the holotype of *craspedotis* and two more August specimens from Baluchistan present in the Zoological Survey of India collection.

Zoological Survey of India,
8, Lindsay Street,
Calcutta 700 016,
January 4, 1977.

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5. A MELANISTIC EXAMPLE OF WOOLLY FLYING SQUIRREL, *EUPETAURUS CINEREUS* THOMAS (RODENTIA: SCIURIDAE)

Literature on the interesting Woolly Flying Squirrel, *Eupetaurus cinereus* Thomas, is scanty and our knowledge about its coloration is due to Thomas (1888), Blanford (1891), Ellerman (1963) and Agrawal & Chakraborty (1970). While going through the collection of squirrels present in the Bombay Natural History Society, we came across four specimens of this species, three similar to the Syntype present in the Zoological Survey of India, the fourth very different from the rest in colour, a fact still unrecorded and therefore, reported here.

The specimen (*BNHS* Reg. No. 7109, without date and sex) was collected by Mr. H. J. Fulton from Chitral, Pakistan. Its entire body including the tail, is covered with thick, long, woolly fur, seal Brown (of Ridgway 1886) in colour. A few hairs on the chin are white tipped. Body is devoid of any grizzling either of gray, ashy or brown. This appears to be a case of partial melanism which is not very uncommon in squirrels. Anderson (1879) reported a large flying squirrel from Kashmir, kept in the Leyden Museum, as "almost jet black on all the upper parts but slightly brownish on the upper surface of forelimbs and flying membrane. The cheeks, chin, throat, chest and belly are brownish with gray line along the middle of the belly." Anderson (op. cit.) regarded it as a melanoid example of *Petaurista petaurista albiventer* (Gray) but Thomas (op. cit.) based on the description, attributed it to *E. cinereus*.

Zoological Survey of India,
8, Lindsay Street,
Calcutta 16,
January 4, 1977.

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V. C. AGRAWAL

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6. ECOLOGICAL STUDY OF HABITATS, FEEDING AND SURVIVAL OF THE INDIAN GAZELLE *GAZELLA GAZELLA* (PALLAS)

The Indian Gazelle *Gazella gazella* now survives in pockets where it enjoys protection particularly close to localities where live the Bishnoi community of people, who consider it a sacred animal and give it complete protection.

I studied the Gazelle between 1973 and 1975 in the Jodhpur region in various selected habitats, particularly at the Gura-Bishnoi area where the gazelle and the Blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*) are common.

The Gura-Bishnoi (Jodhpur) is a largely semi-arid area about 15 km from Jodhpur city. It is mainly sand and scrub wasteland with a fair number of cultivated fields. Cultivation is seasonal (June to October). The average rainfall is 370 mm. Maximum temperature is in summer in June *c.* 45°C and minimum in winter in January *c.* –2°C. Major flora are trees and shrubs:- *Prosopis cineraria, Cocculus cebatha, Maytenus emarginata, Capparis decidua, Lycium barbarum, Zizyphus nummularia, Balanites aegyptiaca* and *Prosopis juliflora* (exotic) perennial herbs—*Crotalaria burhia, Tephrosia purpurea, Fagonia cretica;* perennial grasses—*Cynodon dactylon, Dactyloctenium aegyptium, D. scindicum, Eragrostis ciliaris, Eleusine compressa, Cenchrus* spp., *Cyperus* spp. and *Desmostachya bipinnata.*

The gazelle occurs close to 'Dhanies', the small villages of a few huts of the Bishnoies in the desert area. The Bishnoies protect all animals and birds following the 29 commandments of their prophet 'Jabaji' to protect all trees and animals. The gazelle which formerly occurred throughout the desert region of Jodhpur has been poached severely and none survive except those living close to 'Dhanies' of Bishnoies because the Bishnoies deal so severely with poachers that none dare to poach the gazelle or blackbuck or other animals close to the 'Dhanies' of Bishnoies.

Scrub land having shrubs of *Zizyphus nummularia, Prosopis cineraria* and *Capparis decidua* and abundant *Crotalaria burhia* herbs and some perennial grasses such as *Dactyloctenium* spp., *Eragrostis ciliaris, Eleusine compressa, Cenchrus* spp. and *Cyperus* spp. etc.—is a favoured habitat of the gazelle as it provides food and shelter. Seasonal agricultural fields provide supplementary easily available food to the gazelle. Tanks in low areas